

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 93, I was detained due to an unavoidable conflict. Had I been present, I would have voted aye.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for roll call votes 86–90 due to a family emergency. Had I been present, I would have voted no on #86, no on #87, yes on #88, yes on #89, and yes on #90.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FRANK
EDWARD “ED” RAY**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Frank Edward “Ed” Ray on what would have been his 94th birthday. In a 1976 incident, Ed helped save 26 students from a kidnapping attempt in the city of Chowchilla. Recognizing such heroic actions, it is fitting and appropriate that the City of Chowchilla has chosen to name its largest park “Ed Ray Park.”

Frank Edward Ray was born in Le Grand, California on February 26, 1921. One of eight children of Frank and Marie Ray, he moved to Chowchilla with his family and graduated from Chowchilla High School in 1940. In 1942, he married his wife, Odessa, and bought a ranch where they raised dairy cows and grew corn. Ed then worked for the Dairyland Union School District as a bus driver for nearly 40 years.

Ed was the driver of the school bus packed with summer school kids that was hijacked in Chowchilla in 1976. They were later escorted into a buried moving truck in a quarry, where Ed led them to safety after he and two older boys dug their way out. During the time inside the quarry, Ray gave comfort and hope to the school children. No one was hurt and astonishingly he was able to recall significant details of the escort van’s license plates, assisting in the police investigation.

Ed was a humble and quiet man; he rarely spoke of the ordeal. He did not flaunt himself as a hero. In his final days, Ed was visited by several of the schoolchildren he helped save from the kidnapping. They will always remember him as their hero. A few years after retiring in 1988, he bought the bus for \$500 because he did not want it to become scrap metal at a junkyard. He donated it to a nearby museum in Le Grand, California. Ed’s selfless nature made him a pillar of the Chowchilla community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I recognize the memory of Frank Edward “Ed”

Ray for his brave acts in 1976. May his brave deed and care for the children he drove to and from school every day never be forgotten.

EDUCATION WEEK SPOTLIGHT:
THE COMMON-CORE STANDARDS’
UNDEMOCRATIC PUSH**HON. MIMI WALTERS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following article by Williamson M. Evers, published online on January 13, 2015.

One of the most influential books in social science in the last 50 years is economist Albert O. Hirschman’s *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*.

In this pivotal 1970 book, Hirschman discusses how individuals react when services they rely on deteriorate. The basic responses available to us are “exit” and “voice.” Hirschman points out, where exit means turning to a different provider or leaving the area, and voice means political participation.

We tend to think of these responses as stark alternatives. Hirschman, as a social scientist, wanted us to consider the interplay between them.

Exit usually has lower costs than voice for the individual. With exit, you can avoid the long slog of politics and simply turn to someone else or move somewhere else.

But there is a limiting case: Exit can have high costs when individuals are loyal to institutions—thus the third component in Hirschman’s trio of exit, voice, and loyalty.

In the 1830s, when Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States, he found Americans intensely loyal to their local schools. Americans saw schools as extensions of their families and neighborhoods. They viewed public schools as akin to voluntarily supported charities and as part of what social scientists today call civil society.

Tocqueville described township school committees that were deeply rooted in their local communities. State control of local public education took the form of an annual report sent by the township committee to the state capital. There was no national control.

Today, Americans retain much of the sentiment about local schools they had in Tocqueville’s day. But, increasingly, parents and taxpayers view the public schools as an unresponsive bureaucracy carrying out edicts from distant capitals. Today, we are dealing with a deteriorating situation in a declining institution, namely widespread ineffective instruction in the public schools.

The Common Core State Standards have come to the fore precisely at a time when civically active individuals care much more than they usually do about exit, voice, and loyalty. But the common core has denied voice and tried to block exit.

The common core’s designers have taken the existing bureaucracy and increased its centralization and uniformity. By creating the common-core content standards behind closed doors, the authors increased the alienation of the public from schools as institutions worthy of loyalty. The general public had no voice in creating or adopting the common core.

The other approach in times of a deteriorating public service is offering better exit options. But the common core’s proponents have created an almost inescapable national cartel.

There has long been a monopoly problem in public education, which was why economist Milton Friedman called for opportunity scholarships (also known as vouchers) to create a powerful exit option. But even in the absence of opportunity scholarships and charter schools, we had some exit options in the past because of competitive federalism, meaning horizontal competition among jurisdictions.

Economist Caroline Hoxby studied metropolitan areas with many school districts (like Boston) and metropolitan areas contained within one large district (like Miami or Los Angeles). She found that student performance is better in areas with competing multiple districts, where parents at the same income level can move to another locality, in search of a better education.

We have also seen competitive federalism work in education at the interstate level. Back in the 1950s, education in Mississippi and North Carolina performed at the same low level. North Carolina tried a number of educational experiments and moved ahead of Mississippi. Likewise, Massachusetts moved up over the years from mediocre to stellar.

The common core’s promoters are endeavoring to suppress competitive federalism. The common core’s rules and its curriculum guidance are the governing rules of a cartel. The common core’s promoters and their federal facilitators wanted a cartel that would override competitive federalism and shut down the curriculum alternatives that federalism would allow.

The new common-core-aligned tests, whose development was supported with federal funds, function to police the cartel. All long-lasting cartels must have a mechanism for policing and punishing those seen as shirkers and chiselers, or, in other words, those who want to escape the cartel’s strictures or who want increased flexibility so they can succeed.

The new leadership of the College Board by David Coleman, one of the common core’s chief architects, is being used to corral Catholic schools, other private schools, and home-schooling parents into the cartel. The proponents of the common core have now established a clearinghouse for authorized teaching materials to try to close off any remaining possible avenue of escaping the cartel.

What was the rationale for the common core? The name given to the Obama administration’s signature school reform effort, the Race to the Top program, promotes the idea that the federal government needs to step in and lead a race. Central to this rhetoric is the idea that state performance standards were already on a downward slide and that, without nationalization, standards would inexorably continue on a “race to the bottom.”

I would disagree. While providers of public education certainly face the temptation to do what might look like taking the easy way out by letting academic standards decline, there is also countervailing pressure in the direction of higher standards.

If state policymakers and education officials let content standards slip, low standards will damage a state’s reputation for having a trained workforce. Such a drop in standards will even damage the policymakers’ own reputations.

In 2007, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute looked empirically at state performance standards over time in a study called “The Proficiency Illusion.” The study showed that, while states had a variety of performance standards (as would be expected in a federal system), the supposed “race to the bottom” was not happening. The proponents of the common core are wrong in their claims that state performance standards were inevitably on a downward slide.